News Release

7 November 1988 - Ottawa

The Prime Minister's Office has known for more than a year that Canadians disabled by pollution have been taking their lives out of frustration arising from statements made by federal health authorities. But, despite his office acknowledging the fact, Mr. Mulroney has refused to act.

Mr. Epp has privately expressed sympathy for thousands of Canadians disabled by pollution, but he has never acknowledged or dealt with problems caused by officials in his own department. Health and Welfare officials repeatedly stated the problem was being imagined by victims.

The response of the authorities has been a bigger problem than the problem itself. Health and Welfare spokespersons have repeatedly stated that people claiming to have the problem were deluded, and merely imagining their symptoms as a result of psychological stress. This irresponsible characterisation of people with the problem has had a devastating effect on people's lives. Families have broken up, professional reputations have been ruined, careers ended, and people have committed suicide.

The authorities have demonstrated equally belligerent treatment to those of us who have come forward asking them to accept responsibility for the consequences of their own actions and meet with those affected to work out a resolution. The unfounded statements of health officials have also fostered misconceptions which still exist in society, continuing to frustrate those who need a small amount of co-operation from others in dealing with the problem.

There is a strong likelihood that many people with unexplained chronic health problems have not received proper diagnosis or treatment as a result of what can now only be described as a cover up by officials trying to protect their reputations in the face of realizing their previous irresponsibility.

The environment is an election issue; surely the performance of a government which trashed people disabled by pollution by labelling them as crackers should be discussed as well.

And surely election time is a time to discuss how the government has dealt with the consequences of its own actions, and with citizens who have come forward during parliament with representations about a life and death issue.

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